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ABSTRACT

This review presents a brief history of literature on assertion. It then concentrates on literature published after 1970. The review is divided into two areas: popular books, subdivided into introductory works and more specialized works, and professional books. Materials cited are reviewed and evaluated. (Author/JLL)

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ASSERTION: THE LITERATURE SINCE 1970

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Colleen Kelley

Assertion, assertion, assertion—recently, it seems almost every major weekly has carried an article on the topic. It appears that assertion has arisen out of nowhere to be touted as the miracle-brand solvent for those difficult personal problems left unconquered by TA, TM, or est. Actually, the concept of assertion has been around for many years, although not popularized until the past few years.

Generally, *assertion* (or assertiveness) is defined as appropriate self-expression through which one stands up for one's own basic human rights, without violating the basic human rights of others (Kelley, 1976). Assertion *training* involves helping others to develop this ability.

A Brief Historical Perspective

The concept of assertion was first introduced as part of the emerging behavior modification literature in the late 1940s. In 1949, Salter described what he called the excitatory reflex response and personality in his book *Conditioned Reflex Therapy* (republished, 1961). Nine years later, in 1958, Wolpe devoted most of one chapter of *Psychotherapy by Reciprocal Inhibition* to "assertive responses," a term he preferred to Salter's "excitatory" label. Wolpe's writing included some important additions to and revisions of Salter's basic theory. In *Behavior Therapy Techniques* (1966), Wolpe and Lazarus gave an entire chapter to "assertive training." This chapter was revised by Wolpe in *The Practice of Behavior Therapy* (1969, 1973), while Lazarus discussed assertion further in a chapter of his *Behavior Therapy and Beyond* (1971). With these publications, Salter, Wolpe, and Lazarus had laid the foundations of assertion training,[1] but none had devoted an entire book to the subject.

In 1970, Alberti and Emmons published the classic (and now revised) forerunner of the current outpouring of assertion literature: *Your Perfect Right*. Since that time, the term "assertion training" has skyrocketed to fame and continues to inspire books on the subject. Of the sixteen assertion books considered in this review (including *Your Perfect Right*), all but two were published in 1975 and 1976.

Some see this sudden popularity of assertion as a transitory fad. Others (Jakubowski-Spector, 1973, reviewed in this article) see it as the result of three important cultural changes of the 1960s: (1) people began to value personal relationships more highly, (2) social acceptance of alternate life styles and social behaviors grew, and (3) the women's movement encouraged women to be effective as well as sensitive. Thus assertion filled the need for increased personal effectiveness. The increasingly humanistic approach of behaviorists in recent years is also cited as an important contributing factor to the current status of assertion training.

As the literature of assertion has grown in volume and has become more available to the general public, people have found it more and more difficult to know which assertion

[1] For a more complete summary of this line of development, see D. C. Rimm & J. C. Masters, "Assertive Training," in *Behavior Therapy: Techniques and Empirical Findings*. London: Academic Press, 1974.

book would best meet their needs. This confusion is complicated by the fact that one assertion book may offer some unique and useful section of information not included in another otherwise similar book. Even the most inclusive book may fail to explore a significant aspect of assertion in the depth desired by the reader.

Recent vs. Pioneering Works

Assertion has distinguished itself, since its inception, by its emphasis on (1) anxiety reduction and on (2) skill training in new and more effective behaviors, involving (3) self-expression and the basic personal rights of people in interpersonal situations. The recent literature, however, differs from the pioneering works in several respects:

1. In contrast with the earlier works, the more popular literature is less oriented toward one-to-one therapy and centers more on group training or self-help.
2. Whereas emphasis had been on patients who were almost never assertive or who had very high anxiety levels, assertion training now focuses on clients with normal anxiety levels who wish to become more assertive in one or two specific areas.
3. Prior to 1970, emphasis was on basic behavior modification techniques as they applied to assertion; today assertion has emerged as a separate entity, and behavior modification techniques are only some of the means used to achieve its goals. Among the more recent techniques are structured exercises and instruments.
4. The behavior modification books addressed men's and women's assertion problems; many of the more recent assertion books direct themselves to women.
5. The earlier literature addressed itself solely to the professional therapist; some of the newer books are geared to the professional trainer, and a large number have been written for the general public.

Within these basic distinctions, the new literature varies in terms of content and of stance on basic issues. For example, the questions of what assertion is; who, with what qualifications, should conduct assertion training; whether assertion training is therapy or not; whether the cognitive, affective, or behavioral (nonverbal or verbal) aspects of assertion are the most important focus of training; and whether certain responses are assertive or aggressive are answered in a variety of ways.

Concerns for This Review

In view of the sudden increase in the volume of assertion literature, the newness and smallness of the field, and the diversity of approach, this review attempts to consider all books devoted entirely to assertion and published between 1970 and September, 1976. Although the intended audience, organizational flow, and readability have been taken into account in reviewing these books, the major concern has been with the answers to three questions: (1) What is the book's basic approach? (2) Are the techniques presented effective and ethical? (3) Does the book present a good overview and is it inclusive in the following areas: definition of assertion and an introduction to the topic's basic concepts; examples; behavior modification techniques; other techniques and a variety of approaches; structured exercises; scales; special helps in application areas; and special features or unique contributions?

The review is divided into two areas: popular books, subdivided into introductory works and more specialized works, and professional books. In each section, an attempt has been made to place books of more general interest before those that meet more specific needs. This principle has been adjusted only for books that could be easily

confused, e.g., two books by the same author or two books with similar titles. In this case the two titles have been placed next to each other to make it easier for the reader to compare their differences.

To make the review more useful for a reader who may not be familiar with the subject of assertion, some of the more common terms used in this review are briefly defined here.

- *Anxiety-reduction techniques:* Methods to help reduce anxiety, such as relaxation or graduated exposure to the person or object evoking the anxiety.
- *Behavior modification (behavioral, behavioristic) techniques:* Techniques that teach one to change one's behavior in order to resolve problems or to relieve anxieties, as opposed to methods that simply help one to understand these problems.
- *Behavior (behavioral)-rehearsal procedures or techniques:* Role play, usually combined with other techniques, such as covert rehearsal, modeling, role reversal, and positive reinforcement.
- *Cognitive restructuring, rational-emotive procedures:* Procedures that teach one to become aware of one's present thought patterns and to develop more rational ways of thinking about situations, in order to change one's emotional reactions and behaviors in a particular situation.
- *Covert rehearsal:* The process of imagining oneself responding successfully, or as one would like to, to a particular problem situation.
- *Covert reinforcement:* The procedure of bringing to mind a pleasurable, or positively reinforcing, image in order to reward oneself immediately following a desired response and to increase the probability of responding similarly in the future.
- *Modeling:* Demonstrating for an observer a behavior that the observer wishes to learn.
- *Role play:* The technique of acting out or replicating a situation in which one plays a role or practices behavior that one would like to use in a similar, real-life situation.
- *Role reversal:* The process in which one role player in a role play exchanges roles for a brief time with another role player.
- *Thought stoppage:* The technique of controlling unwanted thoughts through negative self-reinforcement, specifically through using the word "stop," at first shouted aloud and eventually simply said silently to oneself.

POPULAR BOOKS

Introductions to Assertion

The first seven books in this section have such similar content that it is easier to talk about how they are alike than it is to describe their differences. The books all serve as introductions to assertion for the lay reader. To this end, each is written in a somewhat informal style and contains some or all of the following: (1) a definition of assertion, (2) an exploration of personal rights, (3) a number of anecdotes demonstrating nonassertive, assertive, and aggressive responses in particular situations, (4) techniques and structured exercises designed to be used in a self-help program or as part of group training, and (5) methods of applying assertion in various application areas, such as personal development, communication, social relations, and work.

Your Perfect Right
by Robert E. Alberti and Michael L. Emmons.
San Luis Obispo, Calif.: Impact Press, 1970 (2nd ed., 1974). 118 pp., hardbound, $4.95; paperbound, $2.50.

This is the landmark book that put assertion on the map for the popular market. The book has two sections: one for the lay reader and one for the professional. The lay material consists of an introduction to, and discussion of, assertion—what it is, personal rights underlying it, situational vs. general nonassertion and aggression, clear definitions of nonassertion/assertion/aggression—to which most of the later books have deferred, referred, and added. Good case examples are sprinkled throughout the text. There is a short, step-by-step description of how to use behavioral techniques to become more assertive and a section on dealing with the consequences of assertion.

The professional part of the book briefly covers therapist preparation, client diagnosis, and some basic facilitation techniques—chiefly, covert rehearsal, modeling, and behavior rehearsal. Additional features include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a 35-item Assertiveness Inventory, and an annotated bibliography.

Stand Up, Speak Out, Talk Back! The Key to Self-Assertive Behavior
by Robert E. Alberti and Michael L. Emmons.
New York: Pocket Books, 1975. 206 pp., paperbound, $1.75.

This is an expanded and popularized version of *Your Perfect Right*. Additions include a set of assertive vignettes and responses within each of several application areas: personal development, social relations, work, consumer relations, and school. Alberti and Emmons suggest that the reader use these vignettes to practice their step-by-step program of behavioral techniques. Assertive ways of expressing anger/conflict and caring/joy are discussed in separate sections, and there is a more understanding approach to handling put-downs than most other books advocate, an approach that allows both parties to come out ahead.

The authors have dropped the topics of client diagnosis and facilitator preparation in favor of a chapter on "helping others learn assertion." Whereas the earlier work advocated four key steps for facilitators of assertive behavior (knowledge of basic learning principles, familiarity with the literature, practice with components of the training process, and personal assertiveness in the facilitator's own life), this newer version makes everybody an instant winner. It encourages the reader to pass his or her assertive learnings on to a friend or relative, especially through such techniques as modeling and role play. Some very brief guidelines are offered for doing so.

Don't Say Yes When You Want to Say No
by Herbert Fensterheim and Jean Baer.
New York: David McKay, 1975. 304 pp., hardbound, $9.95; paperbound, $1.95.

This book presents perhaps the most erudite and behavioristic approach of this group of seven, and one of the most inclusive. Strongly oriented to setting behavioral goals and developing action plans, the authors present a series of behavior assignments and over twenty structured exercises within various application areas. Many of the structured exercises are really behavioral techniques (relaxation, covert reinforcement, thought stoppage, and behavioral rehearsal), which are discussed in more detail than in most of the other popular books. The application areas include personal development, social relations, close relationships, sex, work, weight reduction, and sexual variants; discussion

within these areas goes beyond basic verbal and nonverbal assertive responses to an exploration of the topic and ways of developing skills within each area.

Negative aspects of the book include occasional displays of sex stereotyping ("If you're a wife, don't pick half-time of the Jets game. If you're a husband, don't start talking before dinner when she's busy at the stove" [p. 136]) and a "beginner's guide to put-downs" which admonishes the reader to "observe the principle: don't be afraid to hurt the innocent" (p. 115).

A short theoretical background of assertion, a 23-item Assertiveness Inventory, and a 19-item Uptight Inventory are included.

How to Be an Assertive (Not Aggressive) Woman in Life, in Love and on the Job: A Total Guide to Self-Assertiveness
by Jean Baer.
New York: Rawson Associates, 1976. 311 pp., hardbound, $9.95; paperbound, $1.75.

This is a more personalized and slightly less behaviorally oriented book than the one Baer wrote with her behavior-therapist husband. The book is geared more to a woman's point of view than the previous book, and the author shares much of her own struggle to be assertive—a process for which she gives her husband a great deal of credit. The traditional behavior modification techniques accompany new structured exercises applied to much the same areas as the earlier book: personal development (including dealing with anger), communication (criticisms and compliments), social relations, close relationships, sex, work, courtship for singles, and children.

Baer's interviews with a number of prominent women on the subject of their own assertion problems constitute one of the book's unique features. There is an expanded and somewhat more constructive section on the handling of put-downs.

One area that seems incomplete is a discussion of assertiveness training. According to the author, there are two kinds: (1) educational lecture series in the basic concepts and (2) therapeutic sessions, either individual or group, which only those holding an M.D., Ph.D., or M.S.W. are qualified to run. Skill training by group facilitators is left out in the cold.

The New Assertive Woman
by Lynn Z. Bloom, Karen Coburn, and Joan Pearlman.
New York: Delacorte Press, 1975. 230 pp., hardbound, $7.95; paperbound, $1.75.

Here is an introduction to assertion that is both smoothly paced and well balanced. Over twenty-five structured exercises and useful questionnaires are evenly distributed in this book as it progresses through a discussion of assertion concepts, the identification of assertive problems and blocks to assertion, ways to develop skills in challenging irrational beliefs, reducing anxiety, listening, and nonverbal communication. The authors suggest a role-play/role-reversal/role-play training method and assertive messages that include empathic statements, expressions of feelings, and statements of wants.

No special helps in application areas are included, although there are chapters discussing sex and the woman's transition from home back to school or work.

The Assertive Woman
by Stanley Phelps and Nancy Austin.
San Luis Obispo, Calif.: Impact Press, 1975. 177 pp., hardbound, $6.95; paperbound, $3.95.

The consciousness-raising emphasis of this book helps put the reader in touch with his or her role-related assertion problems through more than forty structured exercises and

enlightening inventories. Many of the special helps are power oriented and are offered in the following application areas: personal development (anger and humor), confident communication (how not to apologize, how not to answer, how to get an answer, how to say no, how to initiate a conversation, how to handle compliments, criticism, or rejection), sensuality, and children.

The focus is on the asserter's self-understanding and attitude change and on the content of the assertive message; behavior therapy techniques are almost nonexistent. There are short sections on reducing anxiety, developing the nonverbal aspects of assertion, and setting up men's and women's consciousness-raising groups. The authors present two separate types of aggression in their assertion model: direct and indirect.

The more positive assertive skills, such as empathy, listening, and making friends, seem neglected in this book. The broken-record technique is presented without a full explanation of its potentially negative consequences, and the two countermanipulation techniques described seem more defensive than assertive.

How to Become an Assertive Woman: The Key to Self-Fulfillment
by Byrna Taubman.
New York: Pocket Books, 1976. 214 pp., paperbound, $1.95.

Taubman has interviewed trainers and therapists and drawn from a variety of written sources to create a "compendium" of quoted ideas and suggestions, plus over twenty structured exercises in assertion. The result reads something like a book of Heloise's Hints. If the reader is looking for a systematic and comprehensive introduction to assertion, this one is not for him or her, but there are some useful tips and pointers for those not afraid of a few contradictions now and then.

No real theory of assertion is included, nor any specific application areas. Much discussion focuses around self-awareness, identifying problem areas, setting goals, and practicing the words and behaviors appropriate to an assertive response. The book tends to ramble and to be diffuse at times.

The reader is encouraged to teach himself or herself assertion or to form a led or leaderless group, with very brief guidelines for doing so. The broken-record technique is presented in a more flexible form than usual, although its potentially negative aspects are not discussed. Special attention is given to recognizing various irrational fears, hidden aggressions, and manipulations.

More Specialized Books

The following four books differ from the first seven in that they are more specialized. They concentrate in depth on one or two of the areas (techniques and/or applications) covered by the first seven books.

Woman, Assert Yourself! An Instructive Handbook
by Blanche Adams et al.
New York: Harper & Row, 1976. 89 pp., paperbound, $1.50.

This work was first published as a pamphlet, under the title *Assert Your Self*, by Seattle-King County NOW (National Organization for Women) in 1974. Revisions in this edition are minor: the self-image techniques have been edited, and there are several illustrations and an expanded bibliography.

The book is a collection of assertive techniques and guidelines, which the authors, members of an assertion group, have found useful for themselves. It includes a 20-item Assertiveness Inventory; five structured exercises dealing with self-image; and helpful

techniques, suggestions, and practice situations in the areas of social relations, close relationships, work (interviews and business meetings), and consumer relations. There is also a section focused on the reactive communication skills (speaking up, resisting interruption, saying no, stating what bothers you, giving and receiving criticism). Several behavior modification aspects of assertion are mentioned, and some very brief guidelines for a ten-week leaderless assertion group (assertive rap group) are given, including useful rules for giving feedback. There is a short annotated bibliography.

Asserting Your Self: A Practical Guide for Positive Change
by Sharon Anthony Bower and Gordon H. Bower.
Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1976. 244 pp., hardbound, $8.95; paperbound, $4.95.

This systematic workbook presents a step-by-step assertion program that is quite broad, clear, and useful. The Bowers—a counselor and former actress and director, and a psychologist specializing in the study of human learning and memory—have combined their talents in this volume. The book emphasizes both (1) the development of verbal assertive statements—scripting—and (2) the use of behavior modification principles and techniques in becoming assertive.

The chapter-by-chapter skill-building sequence involves: (1) identifying and understanding personal situations in which assertion is lacking and situations in which assertion is desired, (2) improving self-esteem, (3) reducing anxiety and doing some beginning assertion exercises, (4) developing assertive scripts, or verbal replies, and (5) a nine-phase method for practicing assertion. This nine-phase method strongly emphasizes vocal (projection, clarity, expression) skills accompanying the script and includes attention to other nonverbal assertion cues. The workbook includes over fifty original structured exercises within this sequence.

Five of eleven chapters are devoted to various aspects of scripting, a topic that has received only passing attention in other assertion literature. There are guidelines, samples, and directions for writing one's own script. Special pointers and examples are offered on scripting in response to one-shot or long-term harassment or aggression. The focus is on negotiation, not power or put-downs. While the authors suggest that scripting is not bound to the proposed four-stage formula, exercises tend to focus more on knowing exactly what to say and practicing how, when, and where to say it than on developing spontaneous reactions.

The book has several deficiencies. It contains little discussion of a definition of assertion or its theory. Covert- and behavior-rehearsal techniques are not discussed, nor are assertion groups, and the nine-phase training method presented is written to be used entirely by oneself. A few of the sample scripts seem abrasive and not open enough to negotiation, and some of the "I" statements expressing feelings would be better off if they excluded the word "you." Those who object to the use of self-punishment as a technique are free to eliminate its minor role, as the reader is encouraged to tailor the program to his or her needs. A brief description of several defensive techniques does not discuss the potentially destructive results of their repetitive use.

The book uses several acronyms and special terms to aid in remembering assertion concepts developed by the authors. Illustrations are creative, though somewhat male dominated. There is a special section on social skills and a 14-item Assertiveness Questionnaire. A companion 69-page Instructor's Manual (by Sharon Anthony Bower and Beverly A. Potter) is available, which presents an organized eight-class format for teaching assertion. Approximately twenty structured exercises are offered, some of which incorporate written exercises from the workbook. The manual includes brief introductions to systematic desensitization, relaxation, and role play.

I Can If I Want To: The Direct Assertion Therapy Program to Change Your Life
by Arnold Lazarus and Allen Fay.
New York: William Morrow, 1975. 118 pp., hardbound, $5.95.

Rational-emotive in approach, this book aims at helping people identify and change (1) the mistaken beliefs that cause them emotional disturbance and (2) the resultant behavior. The volume is an organized catalog of twenty "mistakes," or mistaken beliefs, each identified and illustrated with an example. The basic misconceptions underlying each mistake are listed, and a program for change toward more assertive thinking and behavior is described. Each program consists of several activities that can be carried out by the reader.

There is very little discussion of assertion per se in this book, although the definition of assertion offered is clear and functional. A 17-item Therapist Selection Questionnaire and five case studies are included.

When I Say No, I Feel Guilty: How to Cope—Using the Skills of Systematic Assertive Therapy
by Manuel J. Smith.
New York: Dial Press, 1975. 324 pp., hardbound, $8.95; paperbound, $1.95.

The first three chapters of this controversial book deal with our inherited survival responses, ways in which other people violate our prime assertive human right, and the common means other people use to manipulate us. This sets a good tone for the theme song of the book: survival in a manipulative world.

Within this first section, a number of irrational or "childish" beliefs concerning how one "should" behave are presented, as well as ten basic human rights with which to contradict the beliefs. Some of the childish beliefs are perhaps not so irrational (Example: "You need the cooperation of other people to survive" [p. 61]), and the basic human rights are more asocial than those presented in other assertion books (Example: Right #10. "You have the right to say 'I don't care'" [p. 67]).

Chapter 4 discusses "the first thing to learn in being assertive: persistence." The remaining chapters center around the seven techniques that form the book's core. Three of the seven techniques—volunteering free information, self-disclosure, and seeking a workable compromise—are positive and equitable. However, these techniques have been allotted just over twelve pages of discussion.

The book concerns itself mainly with four techniques known as broken record (repetition), fogging (agreeing partially or in principle), negative assertion (agreeing with criticism), and negative inquiry (requesting criticism). The stated main purpose of these techniques is to respond to manipulative attempts, benign or not, to control behavior; the second purpose is to reduce defensiveness and anxiety in unpleasant situations. Numerous dialogues demonstrate how to use these techniques in response to attempted manipulation. Many of these dialogues make the a priori assumption that the other person is attempting to manipulate. For example, a person asking for an explanation is perceived as trying to induce guilt. This assumption seems to close off avenues of negotiation prematurely and to promote distrust.

Although Smith denigrates manipulation as a technique, suggests workable compromise whenever self-respect is not in question, and proposes verbal problem solving as the alternative to aggression and flight, there is little in the book that demonstrates real dialogue or that speaks to the rights of both parties involved.

Perhaps the greatest objection that has been made to this book is its approach to the ethical questions involved. While empathy is mentioned as important in dealing with

persons close to oneself, Smith does not discuss many of the limitations and the potentially destructive effects of the techniques. In response to a student's request for some safeguards in using the techniques, Smith states (p. 83) that these skills are amoral. Another student's question as to how sincere Smith was in agreeing with criticism while using the fogging technique is answered: "Does it really matter?" (p. 113).

In general, this book seems to deal more with power than with assertion. Areas of application include communication (saying no, responding to criticism), social relations, sex, work, and consumer relations.

PROFESSIONAL BOOKS

Although many of the books already mentioned describe exercises useful in designing assertion sessions and contain short sections addressed to group leaders or discussions of some aspects of assertion groups, the following books have been written specifically for trainers.

An Introduction to Assertive Training Procedures for Women
by Patricia Jakubowski-Spector.
Washington, D.C.: American Personnel and Guidance Association, 1973. 24 pp., paperbound, $2.75.

This monograph gives a brief introduction to the theory of assertion. Topics include developing a belief system, plus a brief discussion of behavior-rehearsal, rational-emotive, and anxiety-reduction techniques. A preliminary theory of phase changes that people go through as they learn assertion is included. A unique feature is a series of examples of assertion as a continuum: borderline between aggressive and assertive, borderline between nonassertive and assertive, and high-quality assertion.

Responsible Assertive Behavior: Cognitive/Behavioral Procedures for Trainers
by Arthur J. Lange and Patricia Jakubowski.
Champaign, Ill.: Research Press, 1976. 323 pp., paperbound, $6.95.

This is my nomination for a trainer's best buy. Lange and Jakubowski have taken a textbook approach to a comprehensive overview of the field. The book opens with a summarization of the current status of assertion training and devotes subsequent chapters to (1) a definition and analysis of assertion, nonassertion, and aggression, (2) the development of an assertive belief system, (3) over twenty structured exercises for use in assertion training, (4) cognitive-restructuring procedures, (5) behavior-rehearsal procedures, (6) methods for planning and conducting various types of assertion groups, (7) general applications of assertion training, (8) assessment procedures, and (9) ethical considerations. The only section dealing specifically with special helps in application areas, in this otherwise comprehensive book, is a special chapter by Thomas V. McGovern on assertion training for job interviewing and management/staff development. Review questions and exercises at the end of each chapter are designed to help the reader integrate and apply the material.

Treatment is extensive and informative. The definition of assertion includes an analysis of six different categories of assertive statements. The chapter on assessment procedures contains an up-to-date summary of paper-and-pencil instruments available for assessing assertion change. The book contains a 60-item Discrimination Test on Assertive, Aggressive, and Nonassertive Behavior and a topical assertion check list.

Negative aspects of the book are minor, including a small type face, a rather dry style, an inordinate number of references to Jakubowski's books, either earlier or "in press," and a pollution of the assertion vocabulary with newly coined words like "nonassertive

circle" and "unassertive." The authors also seem to have had difficulty deciding whether modeling is or is not a behavior-rehearsal procedure (pp. 155, 176, 177).

The book's approach is an integrative one, offering resources and a philosophy permitting any trainer or therapist to design a course suited to his or her particular goals and orientation.

Assertive Training for Women
by Susan M. Osborn and Gloria G. Harris.
Springfield, Ill.: Charles C Thomas, 1975. 204 pp., hardbound, $10.50; paperbound, $7.95.

For most trainers, the appeal of this humorously illustrated book will lie in Chapter 5, "An Innovative Approach to Assertive Training." This single chapter offers over sixty structured exercises that can be used as presented, in a twenty-five hour, ten-session approach, or employed selectively in designing assertion training modules. The course design differs from conventional practice in two respects: (1) there is little attention paid to the theoretical basis for assertion or the idea of personal rights and (2) the course opens with a series of nonverbal activities.

Much of this volume is strongly oriented to the report from research, with few anecdotes or examples. Although it lacks the range that Lange and Jakubowski offer, the book has a number of unique features for those with special interests: (1) a chapter on group dynamics; (2) a chapter devoted to the message from research as regards aggression, assertion, and power; and (3) sections on assertion and the women's movement and applications of assertion to the woman's social, sexual, work, and family life.

An Appendix contains a 60-item scale designed to assess assertiveness levels, a group evaluation form for feedback to the trainer, and several other useful entries. There are also assertion check lists developed by Lazarus and Rathus and a chapter briefly describing basic behavior modification techniques.

Assertion Training: A Humanistic-Behavioral Guide to Self-Dignity
by Sherwin B. Cotler and Julio J. Guerra.
Champaign, Ill.: Research Press, 1976. 229 pp., paperbound, $5.95.

Cotler and Guerra's approach to assertion training lies in anxiety reduction and social-skill training, in that order. The heart of the book consists of (1) a package of behavioristic techniques designed to measure and reduce relatively high anxiety levels in assertive situations and (2) sixteen structured exercises for developing conversational and other social skills.

The basic program relies heavily on an adaptation of Wolpe's "Subjective Units of Discomfort Scale" (SUDS) to measure anxiety and on relaxation and behavioral-rehearsal techniques to reduce anxiety and to develop assertion skills. The Assertive Data Collection Package (ADCP) used to accomplish these goals includes a 430-item Assertiveness Inventory and diaries and scales designed to document changes in anxiety levels, behavioral and emotional responses in assertive situations, and assertion goals.

Although the language is heavily oriented toward a "therapist" in the "treatment" of clients, some of the instruments in the basic package and most of the structured exercises for social-skill development can be used equally well by group trainers in designing their own assertion sessions.

A section on "protective skills" includes eight defensive techniques and discusses most of the pros and cons involved in this controversial area. Additional features include a good review of the literature and an interesting assertion matrix model designed by the authors.

Personal Effectiveness: Guiding People to Assert Themselves and Improve Their Social Skills
by Robert Paul Liberman, Larry W. King, William J. DeRisi, and Michael McCann.
Champaign, Ill.: Research Press, 1975. 169 pp., paperbound, $5.95.

"Personal effectiveness" is the authors' term for their view of assertion training, which focuses on "enlargement and refinement of social and emotional skills." The method was developed in mental health and clinical settings, and the language is geared to "therapy" and "treatment" by "counselors" or "helping professionals." In general, the approach is a behavioristic, highly structured, directive, and somewhat elementary approach to assertion training.

The manual is divided into three sections, each corresponding to one of the three phases of a Personal Effectiveness Session:

1. A Planning Meeting in which each client reports on the completion of homework assignments from the previous meeting and chooses a feeling or action he wishes to practice in the Training Session;
2. A Training Session in which each client role plays, under the direction of the group leader, the chosen feeling or action with co-leaders or other clients and receives a homework assignment for the next meeting; and
3. An Evaluation Meeting in which group leaders receive feedback on the training session and discuss clients' progress.

Behavioral rehearsal is the core of the approach, with major emphasis on nonverbal behaviors rather than on verbal or cognitive content. Review questions, suggested answers, and practice exercises for the professional are included at the end of each chapter, and there are flow charts throughout the book.

The book has several rough spots. Many questions in the review sections and in examples for use with clients are either simplistic or leading. Illustrations throughout the book label certain postures as *ipso facto* effective or ineffective and depict such scenes as a therapist patting a client on the shoulder upon successful completion of his homework assignment. Although the emphasis in training sessions is totally on positive feedback ("one cannot give a client too much positive feedback" [p. 79]), therapists are encouraged to discuss positive and negative aspects of a client's performances ("I don't know what Tim's problem is . . ." [p. 123]) in the Evaluation Meetings while clients listen.

For the trainer who wishes to use a more flexible, varied, and inclusive assertion program, the book does contain a set of nine structured exercises. Two of these, however, include the broken-record technique, with no attention given to its potentially destructive effects, and an exercise, mistakenly called "fogging," that corresponds more to empathic assertion than to the generally accepted (Cotler & Guerra, 1976; Smith, 1976; Lange & Jakubowski, 1976) definition of the term.

A 30-item Assertiveness Inventory, Rathus' 30-item Assertiveness Schedule, and an annotated bibliography are included. An accompanying 32-page Program Guide, a 6-page Client's Introduction, and a demonstration film are available.

OTHER ASSERTION MATERIALS

In addition to the books reviewed here, there are also assertion tapes and films available. Several new books are forthcoming in the field within the next year, including one in Spanish and another on assertion for blacks. *Assert*, a newsletter published by Impact Press, reviews many of these assertion materials, as well as journal articles and theses as they are made available, and it attempts to keep readers informed about the latest developments in the field.

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